

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROCEDURES

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** This is a complete revision of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook 1620.1 and changes, Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Procedures. These procedures apply to all VHA organizational elements in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) including VHA field facilities.

2. **SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:**

- a. The Voluntary Service Office symbol changed from (162) to (10C2) throughout this issue.
- b. Subparagraph 6a(3): Delete “six” and add “eight.”
- c. Subparagraph 7e(2)(e): Add new subparagraph as follows: “Create a personnel file for all RS volunteers to include: volunteer application; volunteer assignment and name of supervisor; education and training records; evaluations; position description; and other pertinent information relating to the volunteer’s assignment.”
- d. Subparagraph 7f (10): Add “or Associate Representative” after Deputy Representatives .
- e. Subparagraph 7h: Add the following statement for clarification after the word Duties in the second sentence: “(except for voting privileges which may be delegated in the absence of the Facility Representative).”
- f. Subparagraph 7l: Delete: “Service as a Deputy Representative will not count toward the tenure requirement.”
- g. Subparagraph 8d (c): The date for receipt of Voluntary Service Award for Excellence nominations has changed to the last workday in December.
- h. Subparagraph 11f(3)(a)1: Add: “monetary, non-monetary, grand total” at the end of the sentence.
- i. Subparagraph 11k (1): Add “(as specified by the donor),” after “value of items donated.”
- j. Throughout the Handbook, any reference to the Decentralized Hospital Computer Program (DHCP), has been changed to Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VISTA).

k. Appendix A, VAVS Committee Cumulative Attendance Listing, delete “DAV, Ohio” from the form and add “(state) before the AR title under Disabled American Veterans organization.

l. Throughout the Handbook, any reference to Chief, Voluntary Service has been changed to Voluntary Service Officer.

3. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VHA Directive 1620.

4. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Voluntary Service Office (10C2) is responsible for the contents in this VHA Handbook.

5. **RESCISSIONS:** VHA Handbook 1620.1, dated September 25, 1996, and VHA Handbook 1620.1/1, Transmittal Sheet 2, Change 1, dated October 2, 1997.

6. **RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of April 2004.

S/ Thomas Garthwaite, M.D. for
Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.
Under Secretary for Health

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**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROCEDURES**

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROCEDURES

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

a. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides the procedures for the operation of a structured Volunteer Program under the management of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). VAVS operates the largest Volunteer Program in the Federal Government supplementing staff and resources in all areas of patient care and support. Its mission is to provide a structured Volunteer Program under the management of VA compensated employees in cooperation with community resources to serve America's veterans and their families with dignity and compassion.

b. VAVS volunteers assist veteran patients by augmenting staff in such settings as ambulatory care, Hospice Programs, foster care, hospital-based home care, hospital wards, nursing homes, and veterans readjustment counseling centers (Vet Centers). VAVS volunteers and their organizations annually contribute millions of dollars in gifts, donations, and time. Monetary estimates aside, it is impossible to calculate the amount of caring and sharing VAVS volunteers give to veteran patients. Volunteers are a priceless asset to these veterans and VA.

2. GOALS

The goals of VAVS are to:

- a. Ensure that the VAVS Program is supportive of the mission of VA.
- b. Provide veterans served by VA with a comprehensive range of services which are supplemental to budgetary appropriations.
- c. Provide supplemental services in a timely manner through a Volunteer Program that is professionally managed by a Voluntary Service Officer. This is done in cooperation with individuals, veterans service organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations through human resources, gifts, and donations.
- d. Ensure all volunteers are informed of VA's primary responsibilities.
- e. Provide a working environment that is safe, clean, and comfortable.
- f. Promote cooperation among employees and volunteers.
- g. Earn the respect and gratitude of those served.
- h. Ensure volunteers are trained for assignments that provide satisfaction, utilize knowledge and skills, and offer opportunity for learning.
- i. Maintain a volunteer recognition system to ensure that volunteers are appropriately recognized.
- j. Maintain interaction of volunteers with patients in ways which foster the healing process.
- k. Ensure that all volunteers serve under the supervision of VA compensated employees in authorized assignments which meet identified needs.
- l. Ensure that participation in the VAVS Program does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, non-disqualifying handicap, and national origin.

3. AUTHORIZATION TO SERVE IN VAVS

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs is authorized by Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 513 and MP-5, Part I, Chapter 300, Paragraph 4c, to accept uncompensated services of persons as deemed appropriate. VAVS volunteers are covered under this provision. The services of VAVS volunteers will be for the purpose of supplementing, not replacing, VA compensated staff. Volunteers (individuals or groups) are not to be permitted to participate in or conduct a program for patients in a VA facility independent of VA direction, control, and supervision.

a. **Without Compensation (WOC) Volunteers.** Volunteers accepted in the VAVS Program are considered WOC employees. WOC precludes monetary payments, or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy.

b. **Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers.** RS volunteers are individuals who participate in the VAVS Program on a regularly scheduled assignment under VA supervision. Frequency of participation is determined locally. Individuals will be officially authorized to serve on a WOC basis as RS volunteers when they:

(1) Sign the “Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement,” as contained on the reverse side of VA Form 10-5390, RS Volunteer Information Card;

(2) Have been approved for assignment by the Voluntary Service Officer, or designee;

(3) Have participated in required interviews and orientations prescribed by the VA facility; and

(4) Completed a trial period as established by the VA facility.

c. **Occasional Volunteers.** Occasional volunteers are those individuals serving under the VAVS Program who do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers. They must sign a “Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement,” as required by MP-5, Part I, Chapter 300, Paragraph 4c. This waiver may be incorporated on VA Form 10-5392, Occasional Volunteer Time Sheet. Other than copies of these signed time sheets, no individual records will be maintained on occasional volunteers.

NOTE: *Determination of minimum age for regularly scheduled and occasional volunteers is at the discretion of the facility management.*

d. **Student Volunteers.** Student volunteers, 18 years of age or younger, must have written parental or guardian approval to participate in the VAVS Program and authorization for diagnostic and emergency treatment if injured while volunteering. The minimum age for volunteers is determined by the facility management.

NOTE: *Post secondary students will not be considered volunteers while receiving academic credit under a formal affiliation agreement.*

e. **Volunteers from Community Organizations**

(1) Acceptance of volunteer services from members of community organizations in connection with VAVS is authorized provided the organization:

(a) Is in a position to provide volunteers or other resources.

(b) Agrees to VA supervision of its affiliated volunteers while participating in the VAVS Program.

(c) Agrees that its volunteers will participate in all VA facility-required volunteer orientation and training.

(2) Individuals are not required to be affiliated with a community organization to participate in the VAVS Program.

f. **Non-citizen Volunteers.** Persons who are not United States citizens are eligible to participate in the VAVS Program.

g. **Volunteer Assistance by Physicians, Dentists, Nurses and Other Professionally Licensed Persons.** Volunteer assistance by physicians, dentists, nurses, and other professionally licensed persons to assume full responsibility for professional services in their respective fields may be accepted under certain circumstances. All such volunteer assignments must first be approved in advance by the facility Chief of Staff, or designee, who must ensure that any resulting volunteer appointment is first processed through all applicable credentialing and privileging procedures as described in VHA Handbook 1100.19. Limited healthcare procedures, not requiring certification, can be approved as volunteer assignments by the clinical service involved. Any volunteer serving in this capacity must have appropriate training, work under the supervision of a VA compensated clinical staff member, and meet the other criteria for acceptance as a volunteer in the VAVS Program. The assignment must be in

the area of supplementary assistance, and may be performed by either a lay or professionally licensed person working as a volunteer.

h. Volunteer Assistance by VA Employees

(1) VA compensated employees may serve as VAVS volunteers, if their volunteer assignments are unrelated to their employment responsibilities and are outside their normal working hours.

(2) VA paid employees may not be certified to serve as Representatives or Deputy Representatives on the VAVS National Advisory Committee or local VAVS Committees.

i. Volunteer Assistance by Salaried Employees of Organizations. Compensated employees of non-VA organizations may serve as volunteers, if their volunteer assignments are unrelated to their employment responsibilities, their service is supplemental, and a need exists as determined by the VA facility.

j. Volunteer Assistance by Patients, Outpatients, and Former Patients

(1) Facility inpatients will not be permitted to serve as VAVS volunteers.

(2) Individuals who are prescribed or encouraged to volunteer as part of their VA medical care will not serve as VAVS volunteers.

(3) To hasten rehabilitation, to encourage former inpatients to resume normal home and community involvement, to discourage and avoid possible facility dependence, a 6-month waiting period prior to initial acceptance of a former inpatient as a VAVS volunteer is to be considered.

4. TERMINATION OF RS VOLUNTEERS

The Voluntary Service Officer may remove a VAVS volunteer for unsatisfactory performance or violation of established policy and/or procedures.

a. The utilizing service must provide detailed documentation demonstrating that the volunteer, after appropriate orientation and training, has been counseled and sufficient cause for removal exists.

b. Written notification of termination will be sent to the volunteer and, if affiliated, the VAVS Representative.

5. SECURITY, PRIVACY, AND LIABILITY ISSUES

a. To ensure security and safety of patients and patient information, pre-employment background checks may be performed on volunteers assigned to certain areas. These volunteers will be informed of this action prior to receiving their assignment.

b. Volunteers, as WOC employees, are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a and 38 U.S.C. Sections 5701 and 7332) and all VA regulations implementing that statute. Accordingly, volunteers must assist VA staff in safeguarding the privacy of patient information accessed during the course of their duties at the VA facility. Volunteers are not exempt from prosecution or fine in the case of unlawful release of patient information.

c. Volunteers serving on a WOC basis are regarded within the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) when they are working within the scope of their assigned duties.

d. Veterans benefits counseling is not a VAVS assignment. VAVS volunteers will not discuss veterans benefits eligibility information with patients.

e. VA staff will not request volunteers to cash patients' checks or to act as intermediaries in cashing patients' checks. Volunteers may shop for patients provided accountability is established for all transactions. Volunteers will not be held liable for losses, if established procedures are followed and no apparent negligence exists.

6. VAVS COMMITTEES

a. **VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC).** The VAVS NAC, established in 1946, operates under Public Law (Pub. L.) 92-463, "The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)," enacted on October 6, 1972. It became a federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1973, and operates within its current charter. Application for charter renewal must be made every 2 years to the General Services Administration (GSA).

(1) The VAVS NAC advises the Under Secretary for Health and other members of VHA Headquarters staff on how to coordinate and promote volunteer activities within VA healthcare facilities and on matters relating to volunteerism. The members will:

- (a) Promote the VAVS Program.
- (b) Communicate VA policies to their constituencies.
- (c) Make recommendations to improve volunteer services to veterans.

(2) The Chief Communications Officer, VHA Headquarters, serves as the NAC Chairperson. The Director, Voluntary Service Office, serves as Deputy Chairperson.

(3) The membership of the Committee is composed of national organizations. Organizations may designate one National Representative and up to two Deputy National Representatives for representation. Additional deputies up to a total of eight may be appointed when the need is justified and approved by the Director, Voluntary Service Office. VAVS NAC membership policies and procedures are maintained in the VAVS NAC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Organizational membership categories are as follows:

(a) Service Member. Service Member (voting) organizations maintain the provision of volunteers and VA recognized participation on local VAVS committees at a minimum of thirty VA facilities;

(b) Associate Service Member. Associate Service Member organizations maintain the same requirements as Service Members but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities;

(c) Donor Member. Donor Member organizations donate significant funds or materials to assist or benefit veterans at a minimum of thirty VA facilities.

(d) Associate Donor Member. Associate Donor Member organizations maintain the same requirements as Donor Members but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities.

(e) Honorary Member. Honorary Member status recognizes past service of organizations with a minimum of 10 consecutive years of VAVS NAC membership, which are no longer able to meet current minimum criteria for active membership.

(4) The Chairperson of the VAVS NAC appoints the members. Organizations are appointed on a 2-year basis. Reappointment of current VAVS NAC members begins, based upon minimum criteria, at every Annual Meeting held during an even numbered year.

NOTE: National Representatives and Deputy National Representatives may represent only one organization on the VAVS NAC.

(5) Organizations seeking a new membership or a change in membership category may submit a written application and documentation at any time to the Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

(6) Meetings of the VAVS NAC are held annually.

(7) Reports of the Committee's Annual Meetings are prepared and distributed according to subparagraph 11g.

(8) The VAVS NAC Executive Committee is a subcommittee composed of service member organizations of the VAVS NAC. The Chairperson and members are appointed by the NAC Chairperson from the NAC membership. The Executive Committee's purposes are outlined in the VAVS NAC SOP.

(9) VAVS NAC Task Groups may be appointed as needed. Membership on a task group is not restricted to members of the NAC.

(10) FACA requirements apply to the meetings of the NAC and its Executive Committee. These requirements include the following:

- (a) Detailed minutes;
- (b) A record of persons present;
- (c) A complete and accurate description of matters discussed and conclusions reached;
- (d) Copies of all reports received, issued or approved; and
- (e) The accuracy of all minutes certified by the NAC Chairperson.

b. **Facility VAVS Committee.** Each VA medical center and independent outpatient clinic must establish a VAVS Committee.

(1) **Purpose.** The Committee assists with the coordination of plans and policies for community participation in the VAVS Program.

(2) **Chairperson.** The Associate Director, or other senior management official, serves as the Chairperson.

(3) **Membership.** The facility VAVS Committee is composed of the following representatives from each organization accepted for representation:

- (a) One Representative;
- (b) Up to three Deputy Representatives, exclusive of satellite clinic appointments;
- (c) Deputy Representatives for satellite outpatient clinics; i.e.:

1. When medical center management determines the need for VAVS support at satellite clinics for which they have administrative responsibility, organizations may appoint an additional Deputy Representative for the satellite outpatient clinic (a clinic situated at a distance from the medical center).

2. The appointment is to the parent (medical center) VAVS Committee.

- (d) One Associate Representative and Deputy Associate Representative per service organization;
- (e) One Non-affiliated Representative;
- (f) Representatives -at-large; and
- (g) Honorary Representatives.

(4) **New VAVS Committees.** Voluntary Service Office (10C2) approval must be obtained to establish a new VAVS Committee. The request must demonstrate need and that the necessary leadership and support will be provided to justify the establishment of a VAVS Committee.

(5) **Satellite Clinic VAVS Committees.** Voluntary Service Office (10C2) approval must be obtained to establish a VAVS Committee at an outpatient clinic affiliated with a medical center. The request must demonstrate that the necessary leadership and support will be provided to justify the establishment of a VAVS Committee.

(6) **Termination of Membership.** Organizations will be removed from the VAVS Committee when none of the certified members is in attendance at three consecutive meetings. Membership can be renewed with a letter of certification to the facility Director indicating the attendance requirement will be met. Representatives-at-large and the Nonaffiliated Representative will be removed from the membership listing when they miss three consecutive meetings.

NOTE: Notification to the respective National Certifying Official is required when an organization is removed from a local VAVS Committee.

(7) Meetings.

(a) Quarterly meetings will be scheduled each fiscal year. Additional meetings may be scheduled by the chairperson. Meeting dates should avoid conflicting with religious holidays of the Committee members.

NOTE: A Volunteer Recognition Program will not be considered as a quarterly meeting.

(b) A printed agenda will be prepared for each meeting.

(8) Meeting Minutes. Minutes will be recorded for each meeting as a narrative summary.

(a) Minimum guidelines for minutes include:

1. A header on the first page which includes: Facility name and number, mailing address including zip code, telephone number, fax number, name of facility Director, and name of the Voluntary Service Officer.

2. The opening paragraph will contain the name and title of the VA official chairing the meeting.

3. Names and titles of staff members present.

4. Succinct headings and subheadings will be used throughout the minutes to facilitate future reference to subject matter discussed at the meeting.

5. When members pass a recommendation requiring approval of the medical center Director, the recommendation will be noted and follow-up accomplished by the Chairperson.

6. The first attachment to the minutes should be the Cumulative Attendance Listing (see App. A). Activity schedules, subcommittee reports, or other attachments may accompany the minutes.

7. Signatures of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the VAVS Committee will appear at the end of the minutes.

(b) One copy of the minutes will be mailed within 30 days of the meeting date to the following:

1. Members of the VAVS Committee and appropriate staff.

2. Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

3. Officials designated by their organization to review minutes.

NOTE: Mailing labels and an address list of "officials to review minutes" will be forwarded to facilities by the Austin Automation Center, Austin, TX, as requested by Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

(9) Attendance. Attendance by any certified representative of the organization will constitute representation of the organization at the meeting.

(a) A Cumulative Attendance Listing is compiled on a cumulative basis for each fiscal year as a separate attachment to the minutes.

1. Organizations and their representatives will be listed.

2. The dates of expiration for terms of office will be shown for members after their names.

3. For uniformity of reporting, the format and symbols as shown in Cumulative Attendance Listing (see App. A) must be followed.

4. Percentage of attendance will be computed on the representation of the organization based upon the number of meetings to date.

NOTE: The attendance of Honorary Representatives will be recorded, but not used to determine representation of the member organization at meetings.

5. The minutes and attendance listing will be reproduced head to head.

(b) Reporting of new member attendance will begin following acknowledgment of certification by the facility Director and notification of meetings has been given.

(c) Members will be excused when the VAVS Committee meeting conflicts with their presence at their affiliated organization's state or national conventions.

(d) Organizations, Representatives -at-large, and Nonaffiliated Representatives will be removed from the record when the attendance requirement is not met.

c. **Facility VAVS Subcommittees and Task Groups.** Subcommittees and task groups will be appointed to undertake special projects, or study selected aspects of VAVS, and make reports or recommendations to the Committee for action. Membership on subcommittees and task groups will be determined by the abilities, interests, and time availability of representatives. Membership on task groups is not restricted to members of the VAVS Committee.

d. **Facility VAVS Staff Advisory Committee.** Facilities with VAVS Committees will establish a VAVS Staff Advisory Committee. The committee purpose is to actively assist the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the VAVS Committee, and to work to improve the quality of the VAVS Program. Members are appointed by the VAVS Committee Chairperson upon the recommendation of the Voluntary Service Officer. Only paid VA staff can be members of this committee. The Voluntary Service Officer serves as Chairperson and calls meetings as needed. Minutes of the meetings are recorded and distributed.

e. **VAVS Committee Funds.** VAVS Committees are authorized to establish operational funds to provide support for programs or activities that assist in carrying out the business of the VAVS Committee. If such a fund is established, the funds will be deposited in a VAVS Committee General Post Fund account (see subpar. 10b(1)).

7. RESPONSIBILITIES IN VAVS

a. **VHA Headquarters Staff.** The Director, Voluntary Service Office, is responsible for the overall administration and operation of the VAVS Program.

b. **VAVS Member Organizations (National and Facility).** Organizations with representation on the NAC and/or facility VAVS Committee will:

(1) Identify ways to improve the VAVS Program.

(2) Assist in obtaining financial, material, and human resources in accordance with specific needs identified by VHA Headquarters and VA facilities.

(3) Communicate policies and procedures established by the organization to VA.

(4) Appoint members to the NAC and facility VAVS Committees.

(a) Members on the VAVS NAC will be certified in writing to the Director, Voluntary Service Office, by the highest elected or appointed official of each member organization.

(b) Members on the facility VAVS Committee will be certified in writing by the National Certifying Official, or other designated person as selected by the highest elected or appointed official of each member organization.

(c) The certification will be addressed to:

VA Facility Director

ATTENTION: Voluntary Service Officer (135).

(d) The name, address, telephone number, term of office, and position will be clearly indicated for each appointment. The notification should name any individuals who are removed or whose term has expired.

(e) Individuals may be certified to represent only one organization.

(5) Thoroughly review the duties with potential committee members prior to certification to ensure appointees are willing and able to perform them.

(6) Train committee members with emphasis on duties, liaison role, and the quantity and quality of volunteer services to be given by the organization.

(7) Consider replacing any appointee to a committee who:

(a) Has poor attendance at meetings, and/or

(b) Demonstrates ineffective leadership as evidenced by the level of participation of the organization, and/or

(c) Fails to complete assigned duties in a timely and constructive manner.

c. **National Representative**. The VAVS National Representative is the official liaison between VHA Headquarters and the organization in all aspects of the VAVS Program. The National Representative will:

(1) Advise and assist with planning and improving the VAVS Program.

(2) Review and respond to required administrative reports for the organization and VA.

(3) Intervene regarding personality conflicts or inadequate performance by facility representatives when the matter of concern is not resolved locally.

(4) Keep national and local officials informed of VAVS opportunities, accomplishments, and needs.

(5) Attend the NAC Annual Meeting.

(6) Provide available resources to the facility representatives to carry out their responsibilities.

(7) Promote the recruitment of volunteers, including students, within the organization.

(8) Develop and distribute materials for use in training facility representatives.

(9) Serve as, or advise, the National Certifying Official.

(10) Communicate with organization officials at local, state, and national levels, and VHA Headquarters staff on matters of concern.

(11) Encourage state and local membership to support the VAVS Program.

d. **Deputy National Representative**. The Deputy National Representatives will perform duties as assigned by the National Representative. Assignments may include:

(1) Volunteer recordkeeping,

(2) Correspondence,

(3) Publicity,

(4) Speaking engagements,

(5) Training membership on policies and procedures of the organization and VA,

- (6) Participating in the NAC Annual Meeting, and
- (7) Serving as requested on committees and task groups.

e. **Facility Staff.**

(1) **Senior Management.** The facility Director will designate the Associate Director, or other senior management official, to serve as the Chairperson of the facility VAVS Committee.

(2) **Voluntary Service Officer.** The Voluntary Service Officer, is responsible for the administration and operation of a facility VAVS Program. The Voluntary Service Officer, or designee, will perform the following duties:

(a) Serve as Deputy Chairperson of the facility VAVS Committee and Chairperson of the VAVS Staff Advisory Committee.

(b) Provide general orientation to volunteers about the role of the VAVS Program including policies and procedures; e.g., Privacy Act, infection control, fire and safety, etc.

(c) Direct recruitment, placement, orientation, training, evaluation, and recognition of volunteers.

(d) Manage the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VISTA) for volunteer records.

(e) Create a personnel file for all RS volunteers to include: volunteer application; volunteer assignment and name of supervisor; education and training records; evaluations; position description and other pertinent information relating to the volunteer's assignment.

(f) Inform VAVS Committee members of their responsibilities.

(g) Educate VA staff in the management of volunteers to include the:

- 1. Role of the VAVS Program,
- 2. Responsibilities of utilizing services, and
- 3. Duties of the supervisor.

NOTE: Creative and effective use of volunteer resources should be emphasized.

(h) Manage a Quality Improvement Program which meets the standards established by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO) and other mandatory reviews.

NOTE: Voluntary Service quality improvement plans should include the impact of volunteer resources.

(i) Terminate volunteers from service, in cooperation with the utilizing service and the Representative of the affiliated organization, as appropriate (see par. 4).

(j) Provide National Certifying Officials with a copy of the Facility Director's acknowledgement of a representative's and/or deputy representative's certification.

(3) **Utilizing Service.** Service chiefs are responsible for coordinating all volunteer activities with Voluntary Service. Service chiefs, or designees, will:

- (a) Determine the need for volunteer support and assistance.
- (b) Develop volunteer position descriptions in conjunction with the Voluntary Service Officer.

NOTE: The position descriptions will be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary.

- (c) Interview and approve potential volunteers prior to acceptance for an assignment.
- (d) Provide supervision, orientation, training, and recognition of volunteers.
- (e) Provide training, as required by JCAHO, in:
 - 1. Infection control (bloodborne pathogens, etc.),
 - 2. Emergency preparedness,
 - 3. General safety,
 - 4. Equipment management,
 - 5. Utility management, and
 - 6. Other service specific orientation.
- (f) Conduct periodic reviews to determine the effectiveness of volunteer resources.
- (g) Perform administrative duties including the completion of accident reports on injured volunteers.
- (h) Assist Voluntary Service in informing the community about the importance of volunteer service in VA facilities.
- (i) Serve on the VAVS Staff Advisory Committee when requested and attend meetings.
- (j) Represent the service at meetings of the VAVS Committee to demonstrate support for the VAVS Program, expressing the needs of the service, and sharing pertinent information.
- (k) Conduct volunteer performance evaluations to meet JCAHO standards.
- (l) Counsel volunteers when performance is marginal or unsatisfactory, and if necessary, initiate action for removal (see par. 4).
- (m) Ensure adequate space and materials are available for volunteer participation.
- f. **Facility Representative.** The facility Representative is the official liaison between the facility and the organization in all aspects of the VAVS Program. The Representative will:
 - (1) Assist with improving the VAVS Program,
 - (2) Provide input to VA staff and the facility VAVS Committee,
 - (3) Promote the recruitment of volunteers and the donation of financial and material resources in accordance with facility needs,
 - (4) Advise members of the policy and procedures of the organization and facility,
 - (5) Assist VA staff when an affiliated volunteer must be removed for cause,
 - (6) Attend and participate in meetings of the VAVS Committee,
 - (7) Serve as a member of a subcommittee or task group as requested,
 - (8) Maintain records and make reports as required by the organization and VA ,
 - (9) Coordinate activities of the organization with the facility, and

(10) Delegate responsibility and voting privilege to Deputy Representatives or Associate Representatives, as needed.

g. **Facility Deputy Representative.** Facility Deputy Representatives perform duties as assigned by the facility Representative. Assignments could include recordkeeping, correspondence, and training their membership on the policies and procedures of the organization and VA. Deputies attend and participate in the VAVS Committee meetings. They may serve on subcommittees and task groups.

NOTE: Facility Representatives and Deputy Representatives may only serve on one local VAVS Committee.

h. **Facility Associate Representative.** Organizations represented on the NAC may appoint one VAVS Associate Representative from adjacent states to the facility VAVS Committee when the organization has members in an adjacent state participating in the facility Volunteer Program. Duties (except for voting privileges, which may be delegated in the absence of the representative) are the same as a Representative, but limited to the adjacent state. The Associate Representative must hold membership in the organization in the adjacent state.

i. **Facility Deputy Associate Representative.** Organizations represented on the NAC may appoint one VAVS Deputy Associate Representative to the facility VAVS Committee. Duties consist of those assigned by the Associate Representative. Deputy Associate Representatives may participate fully in discussions at facility VAVS Committee meetings and be appointed to subcommittees and task groups. The Deputy Associate Representative must hold membership in the organization in the adjacent state.

NOTE: Appointments of Associate Representative or Deputy Associate Representative to the designation of Representative or Deputy Representative are authorized when the home state organization is not represented. These appointments must be made with the clear understanding that if the respective home state organization later certifies representation, the previous appointment will revert to associate status.

j. **Facility Nonaffiliated Representative.** Upon the recommendation of the Voluntary Service Officer, the facility Director may appoint a Nonaffiliated Representative to represent volunteers who are not affiliated with a member organization. The Nonaffiliated Representative will attend VAVS Committee meetings as a voting member and serve on subcommittees and task groups as requested. Terms of office will be at the discretion of the facility Director.

k. **Facility Representatives-at-large.** Representatives-at-large may be recommended by the Voluntary Service Officer, and certified by the facility Director to serve as members of the VAVS Committee. They are individuals who have demonstrated skills and interest in the VAVS Program and are willing to assist with the mission of the committee. Terms of office will be at the discretion of the facility Director.

l. **Facility Honorary Representative.** A Representative who serves at least 10 years on the VAVS Committee may be appointed by an organization to serve as an Honorary Representative; however, they may not hold office. Honorary Representatives will serve as advisors to the committee without vote and should receive all VAVS Committee correspondence as do the other VAVS committee members. Honorary Representatives may serve as members of task groups.

8. RECOGNITION

It is VAVS policy to provide appropriate recognition for contributions of the VAVS volunteers and their organizations to the VAVS Program. Volunteers have a significant impact on VA and should be recognized for their contributions. Recognition is the responsibility of all staff and may consist of tangible awards, such as certificates, pins, plaques, etc. Equally important is the intangible recognition given daily, such as verbal acknowledgment and the sense of belonging to the healthcare team.

a. Award Eligibility.

(1) Hours for recognition will be given to volunteers when services are rendered within a VA facility, clinic, or other off-station site approved by VA as an appropriate location for an RS assignment under VA supervision. Credit will be given for hours actually worked, rounded to the nearest hour.

(2) Hours will be authorized:

- (a) From the time a volunteer reports for duty until the assignment is completed;
- (b) From portal-to-portal for volunteers in transportation programs whose assignment requires them to pick up patients prior to reporting to the VA facility;
- (c) For volunteers serving in a community-based assignment from the time they reach the assignment until the assignment is completed;
- (d) For VAVS Committee members attending committee meetings, task groups, etc., at the facility or at alternate locations approved by the VA facility;
- (e) For volunteers who are active at more than one VA facility and request to consolidate their hours for the purpose of receiving awards. Concerned Voluntary Service Officers must reach a consensus on how to implement the request; and
- (f) For occasional volunteers, service hours will be credited to the affiliated organization and not used for the purpose of calculating hours toward individual VAVS awards.

(3) Hours will NOT be authorized for:

- (a) Services rendered other than those assigned by VA;
- (b) Assignments performed without VA supervision;
- (c) Volunteers serving in state veterans homes unless the assignment(s) are performed under VA supervision;
- (d) Employee childcare centers, exclusive of those managed by VA Canteen Service, even if located on the facility campus;
- (e) Employees of veterans service organizations and others operating within the scope of their employment;
- (f) Time spent completing projects at home, e.g., sewing lap robes, baking, etc. (unless the assignments are performed under VA supervision); and
- (g) Those assigned to VA Incentive Therapy or other VA compensated work programs.

b. **Awards.**

(1) **Individual.** VAVS awards will be presented to volunteers who have met the eligibility standards. Awards are typically presented based on the previous fiscal year. They include:

(a) **VAVS Pins**

1. **Yellow Rocker** (Student Only):

- a. 50 Hours,
- b. 100 Hours,
- c. 150 Hours, and
- d. 300 Hours.

NOTE: Additional awards should be presented to eligible student volunteers.

2. **White Rocker**

- a. 100 Hours,
- b. 300 Hours,

- c. 500 Hours,
- d. 750 Hours, and
- e. 1,000 Hours.

3. **Red Rocker**

- a. 1,750 Hours,
- b. 2,500 Hours,
- c. 3,750 Hours, and
- d. 5,000 Hours.

4. **Green Rocker**

- a. 6,250 Hours,
- b. 7,500 Hours,
- c. 8,750 Hours, and
- d. 10,000 Hours.

5. **Blue Rocker**

- a. 12,500 Hours,
- b. 15,000 Hours,
- c. 17,500 Hours,
- d. 20,000 Hours,
- e. 22,500 Hours,
- f. 25,000 Hours,
- g. 30,000 Hours,
- h. 35,000 Hours,
- i. 40,000 Hours,
- j. 45,000 Hours, and
- k. 50,000 Hours.

(b) **Certificates.** VA Form 10-7031d, Voluntary Service Award for Hours and Years of Service, is presented to volunteers who have previously earned the 1000 hour pin and who have served at least 100 hours during the previous calendar year. This award will **NOT** be given during the years in which the volunteer qualifies for another award.

(c) **Other Awards**

- 1. 7,500 Hour, Dedicated Service Award Plaque;

2. 8,750 Hour, Outstanding Merit Award Plaque;
3. 10,000 Hour, Honor Award Bowl;
4. 12,500 Hour, Outstanding Service Award Pyramid;
5. 15,000 Hour, Exceptional Honor Award Medallion;
6. 17,500 Hour, Superior Service Award Plate;
7. 20,000 Hour, James H. Parke Achievement Award Tray;
8. 22,500 Hour, Mantle Clock;
9. 25,000 Hour, angular, 6" x 8" Jade Crystal;
10. 30,000 Hour, angular, 7" x 9" Jade Crystal;
11. 35,000 Hour, angular, 8" x 10" Jade Crystal;
12. 40,000 Hour, octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with wood base;
13. 45,000 Hour, octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with crystal base; and
14. 50,000 Hour, 7" x 10" Jade Crystal Tower.

NOTE: VA pins denoting equivalent hours of service will be awarded in conjunction with the preceding items listed.

(2) **Group.** VA awards may be presented by the facility Director, or Voluntary Service Officer, to individuals and groups in recognition of exceptional service, special contributions, or continued outstanding service in VAVS. These awards should be processed through the facility Voluntary Service for coordination and verification.

(a) VA Form 10-9023, National Salute Certificate of Appreciation, may be given in support of outstanding participation during the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

(b) VA Form 10-7042, Outstanding Service Award, may be presented on a selective basis.

NOTE: Locally developed awards may be presented to augment national awards.

(3) **One-time Only Awards.** Additional recognition may be given as follows:

(a) **The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award.** The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award is an annual award consisting of a certificate and scholarship given to a student volunteer. The number of scholarships and amounts are established annually by the James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board. Details of the award and criteria are contained in VA publication IB 10-20, "The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award."

(b) **The Voluntary Service Leadership Award.** VA Form 10-1208, The Voluntary Service Leadership Award, and associated pin may be presented to any member of the local VAVS committee, who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and abilities, benefiting VA and/or its beneficiaries.

1. **Nomination.** The nomination, with a cover letter from the facility Director, addressing all elements must be sent to the National Certifying Official, or designee, for concurrence at least 2 months prior to anticipated presentation.

a. If the concurring official does not reply within 21 days from the date of notification, concurrence will be assumed.

b. In the event of nonconcurrence, the National Certifying Official, or designee, will notify the facility Director by letter, with a copy to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), VHA Headquarters, of reasons for nonconcurrence. When concurrence is denied, presentation of the award will be withheld.

2. Eligibility criteria

a. Nominees must meet all five of the following elements:

- (1) Element 1: Hold current certification.
- (2) Element 2: Attend 100 percent of VAVS meetings in the previous year.
- (3) Element 3: Serve actively in an RS assignment other than the VAVS Committee.
- (4) Element 4: Participate on a VAVS subcommittee or successfully complete a special project assigned by the VAVS Committee Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.
- (5) Element 5: Complete the Annual Joint Review in a timely manner.

b. Nominees must meet three of the following five accomplishment elements:

- (1) Element 1: Increased or maintained involvement of the organization in the VAVS Program as evidenced by:
 - (a) New programs,
 - (b) Number of volunteers,
 - (c) Number of hours,
 - (d) Number of visits, and
 - (e) Stability of existing programs.
- (2) Element 2: Submitted recommendations which have been implemented and positively impacted VA.
- (3) Element 3: Provided significant support through gifts and donations from their organization.
- (4) Element 4: Involved new individuals or organizations in VAVS through volunteer resources and/or gifts and donations.
- (5) Element 5: Demonstrated expertise and/or guidance to other VAVS members and ability to plan and organize committee work.

(c) **Secretary's Volunteer Service Award.** The Secretary's Volunteer Service Award is an 11" x 14" embossed certificate, signed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, presented with a blue and gold diamond enamel pin. This award may be issued only once and should not be given indiscriminately or during the year in which the volunteer qualifies for another award.

1. Nomination for the Secretary's Volunteer Service Award should be submitted at least 3 months in advance of the anticipated presentation.

2. The nomination may be initiated by any VA employee with concurrence of the utilizing service, Voluntary Service Officer, and the facility Director.

3. The nomination must include a cover letter of recommendation to the Secretary, signed by the facility Director, and forwarded through the appropriate channels to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), VHA Headquarters.

4. The nominee should meet or exceed the following criteria:

- a. Service. A minimum of 10 years of service and 11,000 hours.
- b. Performance. Dependability, teamwork, and unique contributions.
- c. Impact. Improvement, efficiency, or quality of service to VA and its beneficiaries.
- d. Attributes. Generosity, sensitivity, diplomacy, and flexibility.
- e. Other Factors. Non-VA awards, community involvement, length of service, special accomplishments, etc.

c. **Presentation of Awards**.

(1) The presentation of awards is of equal, if not greater importance, than the award itself; management will give support and attention to the planning and presentation of VAVS awards.

(2) The senior management official should present these awards whenever possible, exclusive of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, which is presented at the VAVS NAC Annual Meeting.

(3) Procurement of awards presented at the local level, exclusive of the Secretary's Award, is the responsibility of the local facility.

(4) Facility unearmarked General Post Funds may be used to purchase VAVS awards for volunteer recognition.

d. **Voluntary Service Award For Excellence**. This award is to recognize a Voluntary Service Officer, or other key staff with primary responsibilities for the management of Voluntary Service, who has demonstrated adherence to the highest standards demanded by the profession.

(1) **Criteria**

(a) Impact on patient care and/or employee morale.

(b) Innovations, new programs, management initiatives, and their tangible and/or intangible benefits.

(c) Contribution to Voluntary Service (efficiency, cost savings and/or avoidance).

(d) Professional involvement (American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services (ASDVS), Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA), local, state and/or regional participation).

(e) VA medical center and/or community involvement.

(2) **Nominating Procedures**. Nominees must be recommended by their immediate supervisor or higher level officials at the facility.

(a) **Preparation of Nominations**. All nominations must be prepared in a narrative format, not to exceed two typewritten, single-spaced pages, specifically addressing the nominee's contributions under all of the criteria. The nomination should cover performance during the preceding 12 months.

(b) **Submission of Nominations**. All nominations must be forwarded through local channels and contain the endorsement of the facility Director. Endorsed nominations will be forwarded to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), VHA Headquarters, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. The Director, Voluntary Service Office, will be responsible for receiving all endorsed nominations and coordinating the selection process.

(c) **Deadline for Receipt of Nominations**. The deadline for receipt of nominations in VHA Headquarters, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), is COB the last workday in December.

(d) **Selection Process**. An ad hoc selection committee will be established by the Director, Voluntary Service Office.

(e) **Award Presentation.** A travel honorarium to the National Advisory Committee Meeting and a plaque or other appropriate award from the Director, Voluntary Service Office, will be presented. When travel funds are not available, the award will be presented at the field facility by the medical center Director.

(f) **Notification.** The Director, Voluntary Service Office, will notify the nominees, through their facility Directors, of the selectee.

9. OTHER SERVICES AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEERS

a. **Meals.** Meals may be furnished without charge to RS volunteers provided their scheduled assignment is at least 4 hours and/or the value of the service is commensurate with the value of the meal. Meals may be provided to others at the discretion of the facility Director if the facility Director determines that the individuals render a service which will benefit VA in discharging its responsibilities to patients. If the facility is providing meals, it is the responsibility of the Voluntary Service Officer to notify appropriate staff concerning any significant changes in the number of planned daily meals. When the facility is unable to furnish such meals, VA is authorized to provide meals without charge to qualifying volunteers, in accordance with existing regulations (see M-1, Pt. I, Ch. 2; and MP-1, Pt. II, Ch. 3, Par. 1e(1) and (2)).

b. **Quarters.** Temporary available quarters may be furnished to volunteers at no charge, in case of an emergency (see M-1, Pt. I, Ch. 2).

c. **Parking.** Facilities will make every effort to provide parking for RS volunteers without charge.

d. **Transportation for Volunteers.** The VA facility may furnish transportation to those volunteers whose presence at the VA facility is necessary for complete medical and hospital service. Necessary transportation can be furnished by means of commercial or Government transportation.

NOTE: Transportation may be obtained by either a direct contractual arrangement or an indirect arrangement, utilizing tickets, tokens, or cash provided by way of reimbursement (see Opinion of General Counsel 4-65).

e. **Identification for Volunteers.**

(1) All VA facilities will issue identification to RS volunteers.

(2) Facilities are encouraged to provide smocks and/or jackets to aid in the identification of volunteers.

(3) Affiliated volunteers are authorized to wear insignia and uniforms identifying their affiliation except where it is medically inadvisable. In these instances, VA will explain to the concerned volunteers and to their Representatives the reasons for the exceptions.

f. **Medical Treatment.**

(1) Volunteers are considered WOC employees and are provided health services and medical benefits in accordance with established policy for employees as outlined in MP-5, Part I, Chapter 792. Specifically this means that:

(a) New volunteers, not normally required to have a physical examination, when deemed necessary for the protection of VA patients or volunteers, will be provided a physical examination without charge.

(b) A Physical evaluation may be required based on the requirements of the volunteer position or to determine fitness for duty.

(c) Emergency outpatient treatment for injuries sustained while performing assigned volunteer service will be provided to volunteers.

(2) Voluntary Service, in cooperation with the facility's Infection Control Committee, will determine the need for tuberculin tests and examinations, including chest x-rays, for RS volunteers. These procedures will be provided without cost to the volunteer.

(3) Volunteers will receive other employee benefits and/or services as determined locally, including cholesterol testing, blood pressure screening, and influenza vaccinations.

g. **Use of VA Facility Services.** As determined locally, volunteers may use facilities authorized for employee use.

h. **Compensation Benefits.** All VAVS volunteers, both RS and occasional, are considered employees for the purpose of compensation benefits as provided under the injury compensation laws (see 5 U.S.C. Ch. 81). All volunteers who are injured in the course of their assigned duties are authorized medical services by the Office of Workmen's Compensation (see MP-5, Pt. I, Ch. 810).

i. **Space, Equipment, Data and Reasonable Accommodations for Volunteers.**

(1) Facility Directors are authorized to allocate office space and furnish office equipment and telephones, when available, to VAVS representatives.

(2) Necessary space and equipment will be provided to individual volunteers to conduct or carry out their assignment; i.e., protective glasses, safety equipment, etc.

(3) Utilizing services will ensure that reasonable accommodation is afforded volunteers to accomplish assigned duties.

(4) Volunteers, as WOC employees, are authorized access to necessary confidential and sensitive information (via files, computers, etc.) in order to complete their assignment.

10. DONATIONS

a. **Delegation of Authority for Acceptance of Gifts and Donations.**

(1) In accordance with VHA Directive 4721, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may accept, for use in carrying out all laws administered by VA, gifts, devises, and bequests which will enhance the Secretary's ability to provide services and benefits (38 U.S.C. 8301). The Secretary has not delegated this authority to any VHA official. Therefore, any offers of gifts to VA received by VA officials which are not acceptable under this paragraph must be forwarded through appropriate organizational channels to the VA Central Office General Post Fund Review Committee (117D), for submission to the Secretary.

(2) In VHA, the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, is delegated authority to accept gifts and donations for the benefit of patients and members of VA medical facilities, or for the benefit of one or more medical centers, domiciliaries, nursing homes, or clinics subject to the limitations in VHA Directive 4721.

(3) Facility Directors are authorized to accept gifts and donations for the benefit of patients or for the benefit of their medical center, domiciliary, nursing home, or clinic (see VHA Dir. 4721).

(4) The Voluntary Service Officer at each facility has the authority to accept gifts and donations for the benefit of that facility and its patients, except for gifts for research and education purposes (see VHA Dir. 4721). Voluntary Service Officers are required to acknowledge all gifts and donations accepted in Voluntary Service, within 30 days of receipt.

(5) The Chief, Chaplain Service, at each facility is authorized to accept gifts for the benefit of the religious needs of patients and to support all Chaplain Service activities (see M-2, Pt. II, Ch. 5 and VHA Directive 4721).

b. **General Post Fund (GPF).** Policies and procedures governing GPF and accepting gifts and donations are included in VHA Directive 4721. This Directive includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

(1) Fiscal Service at each VA medical facility shall establish a VAVS Committee GPF account at the request of the Voluntary Service Officer. Treasurers of VAVS Committees may request the withdrawal of funds from their VAVS Committee GPF account with the concurrence of their Voluntary Service Officer. Fiscal Service at each VA medical facility shall use the simplest possible procedures to timely process such requests for withdrawals from this account.

NOTE: All accounts or investments external to VA, under the purview of a VAVS Committee, are prohibited.

(2) Funds deposited in the VAVS Committee GPF account may be used, as decided by the respective Committee, to provide support for programs or activities that assist in carrying out the business of the local VAVS Committee. Some examples are:

(a) Gifts for patients for distribution during National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week, Memorial Day, National Prisoners of War and/or Missing in Action Recognition Day, Veterans Day, Armed Forces Day, Christmas, and/or other special days;

(b) Canteen books and personal care items for patients;

(c) Refreshments for VAVS activities and other VA medical facility special events to which patients are invited;

(d) Support for VAVS volunteer recognition awards and volunteer recognition ceremonies;

(e) Support for VAVS student volunteer recognition; and

(f) Support for the Annual VAVS NAC Meeting which entails transferring funds to the GPF account of the host VAVS Committee.

c. **Disposition of Donations.**

(1) Disposal of applicable items will be in accordance with Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), Subchapter H.

(2) Medical center Directors are encouraged to make necessary arrangements to return donated vehicles to the donor organizations when the GSA safety standards are no longer met, or the condition of the vehicle is determined to be unacceptable.

11. RECORDS AND REPORTS

a. **Records Retention.** A system of records will be maintained in Voluntary Service to include master records of Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers, documents of participation of Occasional Volunteers, signed "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement," parental or guardian consent forms for student volunteers, etc. Voluntary Service administrative and general correspondence files will be maintained in accordance with Records Control Schedule (RCS)

10-1.

(1) Information on VA Form 10-7055, Application for Service, is solicited under 38 U.S.C. 513 and is therefore subject to the requirements and restrictions of the Privacy Act.

(2) Information from VA Form 10-7055, may be released to an authorized official; e.g., VAVS Representative of the volunteer's organization, only for the purpose of conducting VA assigned and approved duties.

(3) Information on VA Form 10-7055 is to be retained as part of the master record for RS volunteers.

(4) VA Form 10-5390, RS Volunteer Information Card, will be retained to serve as the record of initial waiver and must contain a signed acknowledgment of:

(a) Solicitation of information under 38 U.S.C. 513.

(b) "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement;" and

(c) Parental or guardian consent for student volunteers, if applicable.

(5) Parental or guardian authorization for diagnostic and/or emergency medical treatment of student volunteers must be obtained.

(6) The computer generated "Terminated RS Volunteer Summary" must be retained.

(7) Records documenting the participation of occasional volunteers will include the following:

(a) The identity of the person;

(b) The identity of the VA establishment, the organizational segment where the service is to be performed, and the nature of the service;

(c) The inclusive dates of the agreement, or in lieu of a terminal date, a statement such as "for an indefinite period;"

(d) A waiver of all claims to monetary remuneration;

(e) A provision to cancel the agreement by either party upon written notification;

(f) Authority under which the agreement is made (38 U.S.C. Section 513); and

(g) Signature of the person and the VA appointing official.

NOTE: The preceding listed provisions may be incorporated into the sign-in sheet for volunteers.

b. **Facility Reports of Service.**

(1) Each VAVS Committee Representative will be provided a monthly computer printout listing volunteers and records of service.

(2) Each utilizing service will be provided a monthly computer printout listing information on volunteers assigned to their service.

c. **National Reports of Service.**

(1) VAVS National Representatives will be provided semiannual computer printouts of their volunteers summarizing the organization's number of RS volunteers, visits and hours in each VA facility and local VAVS Committee representation.

(2) Each VHA Headquarters Service Director will be provided a semiannual computer printout of their service's numbers of volunteers, visits, and hours in each VA facility.

d. **Records Disposal.**

(1) Voluntary Service administrative and general correspondence files will be maintained in accordance with RCS 10-1.

(2) Computer generated records should be retained in accordance with the requirements of the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology (VISTA).

e. **Automated Information System Records.**

(1) Voluntary Service is required to record hours and visits of all volunteers each month. The processing of this data will be accomplished by utilizing VISTA. **NOTE:** *See Volunteer Management User Manual version 4.0, dated April 1998.*

(2) All volunteer information will be entered into the VISTA system. This information including any additions and/or changes will be recorded and retained as part of the permanent record.

(3) Input to the system is transmitted from each facility to the VA Automation Center, Austin, TX. After the master record files are updated, data is extracted from the records to create reports. These monthly, semiannual, and annual reports, Computer Output Identification Numbers (COINs), are distributed by Austin to each VA facility.

(4) When a volunteer transfers to another VA facility, upon the volunteer's request, hours of service, awards, and other pertinent data should be transferred to the new VA facility. Transferred hours are creditable at the new location toward awards not previously received. This

can be accomplished by the receiving facility editing the master record in Austin. The prior service hours can be manually adjusted to reflect the volunteer's total number of hours.

f. **Annual Narrative Report.**

(1) The purpose of the Annual Narrative Report is to provide:

(a) An opportunity for Voluntary Service Officers to assess their VAVS Program during the previous fiscal year and to set goals for the next fiscal year.

(b) Programmatic information and analysis to the Chairperson, VAVS Committee, facility management, and the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

NOTE: *Voluntary Service Officers having responsibilities at more than one facility (i.e., integrated facilities), should address secondary station VAVS Programs in this report.*

(2) The Annual Narrative Report for the fiscal year period October 1 - September 30 is submitted annually through the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2). The report header should include the name and location of the VA facility, date of report, period covered, and Report Control Number (RCN) 10-0006. It will be submitted to reach VHA Headquarters no later than November 15 (45 days following the last day of the report period).

(3) The Annual Narrative Report will be prepared by the Voluntary Service Officer. It will be submitted for concurrence through the Chairperson, VAVS Committee, and the VA facility Director. The following is an outline that should be followed in preparing the report:

(a) Program Workload, Developments, and Trends. This section should include:

1. Statistics concerning RS volunteers, RS hours, all volunteer hours, gifts and donations for the immediate past fiscal year compared to the previous fiscal year; monetary, non-monetary, grand total;

2. A narrative assessment of the VAVS Program's impact on the local station's operations (i.e., how the VAVS Program benefited the facility);

3. A brief description of successful projects and activities implemented (i.e., fund-raising activities, corporate involvement, non-traditional community sponsored events, etc.);

4. New and/or unique volunteer assignments initiated; and

5. Assessment of VAVS Committee(s).

(b) Program Management. Include management initiatives, consolidations, realignments, integrations, changes in function, and quality assurance issues having an effect on the VAVS Program.

(c) Community Relations and Activities. A brief summary of activities and contacts, including the number of contacts with community organizations, explanations of new or unique contacts and/or innovative approaches can be included in this section of the report. Names of individuals, organizations and businesses are not necessary.

(d) Report of Programmatic Goals. A report of programmatic goals, including:

1. Progress on goals set for this reporting period, and

2. Goals established for the next fiscal year.

(e) Other. Significant changes, accomplishments, problems and comments not fitting into any of the preceding categories are to be included in this section.

g. **Report of National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting.** A copy of the NAC Annual Meeting Report will be distributed to all members of the NAC, all Voluntary Service Officer, and others as required by FACA.

h. **Annual Joint Reviews.** The Annual Joint Review (AJR) is conducted to assess organizations' participation in the VAVS Program during the preceding year and to develop goals for the next year. The AJR provides an opportunity for the organization's representatives and Voluntary Service Officer to develop plans that will ensure active participation by the organization in programs for the welfare of veteran patients.

(1) The Voluntary Service Office (10C2) will periodically provide Voluntary Service Officers with updated listings of months that VAVS National Advisory Committee member organizations are due for AJRs.

(2) The AJR team consists of the organization's Representative, Deputy Representative(s), and the Voluntary Service Officer.

(3) A mutually agreeable date and time will be set by the members of the review team during the month scheduled.

(4) VA Form 10-1240, VAVS Summary of Annual Joint Review, is used to summarize the work of the AJR team.

(5) All AJR summaries must be prepared, signed, and distributed within 15 working days following completion of the review.

(6) The original VA Form 10-1240 is retained by the Voluntary Service Officer. A copy is sent to:

(a) The VAVS National Representative with acknowledgment form, VA Form 10-1240a attached; and

(b) The local VAVS Representative.

NOTE: A copy is not required by Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

(7) If the Voluntary Service Officer and the organization's representatives are unable to schedule and complete an AJR within the designated month, a report to that effect must be submitted by the Voluntary Service Officer on VA Form 10-1240 to all recipients as described in subparagraph 11h(6).

(8) This request for information is exempt from a Report Control Number (RCN) under MP-1, Part II, Chapter 26.

i. **Report on National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Activities.** The Voluntary Service Officer will submit a summary report of the National Salute activities. This report will be submitted to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), with the concurrence of the facility Director and an information copy to the VISN Director, by the 10th workday in March. The format of this report is contained in Appendix B.

j. **VAVS National Advisory Committee Recommendations.** VHA Headquarters will annually share all NAC adopted recommendations with Voluntary Service Officers and solicit responses. The Director, Voluntary Service Office, proposes VA comments on each adopted recommendation, based upon responses received and submits these via a numbered information letter over signature of the Under Secretary for Health.

k. **Expendable and/or Non-Expendable Donation Report by Category**

(1) Voluntary Service will maintain a record of all donations received. This record includes name of donor, organizational affiliation (when appropriate), items donated, value of items donated (as specified by the donor) and disposition of donated items.

(2) A summary report will be submitted by the Voluntary Service Officer, or designee, to Fiscal Service on a monthly basis as required by VHA Directive 4721. The report includes the value of donated items received by category; i.e., supplies, equipment, etc.

12. TRANSPORTATION

Transporting veterans seeking a variety of services and benefits to and/or from a VA facility or other approved healthcare provider is an authorized VAVS volunteer assignment.

a. **Volunteer Drivers.**

(1) Volunteer drivers are considered WOC employees within the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) when they are performing their assignments and the following conditions have been met:

- (a) Completed a volunteer application,
- (b) Attended an orientation prescribed by the VA facility,
- (c) Signed VA Form 10-5390, RS Volunteer Information Card, a waiver of compensation statement, or facsimile,
- (d) Received all training required by the VA facility,
- (e) Provided proof of safe driving record and current driver's license,
- (f) Provided proof of current automobile insurance,
- (g) Completed Standard Form (SF) 47, Physical Fitness Inquiry, and
- (h) Passed a physical examination or screening, if required (see 5 CFR 930.108-930.109).

(2) VAVS volunteers are protected by FTCA while they are engaged in the performance of their specific assignment. Deviation from the duties of the assignment could exclude individuals from coverage of the Act. It is necessary that Transportation Volunteers refrain from making side trips while in the performance of their assignment and take the most direct route to and from the VA facility.

b. **Operation of VA-Owned Vehicles.** Volunteers may operate Government-owned vehicles in accordance with established policy (MP-3, Pt. III, Sec. 32.30, "Motor Vehicle Safety Program"). In addition to the requirements cited, the following conditions must be met:

- (1) The transportation must be related to an approved VA function and must be considered official VA business,
- (2) The volunteer must adhere to practices promoting good vehicle maintenance and safety, and
- (3) The volunteer must accept VA staff supervision.

NOTE: Veterans utilizing this service will not be eligible to receive reimbursement for travel expenses (see M-1, Pt. I, Ch. 25).

c. **Operation of Privately Owned Vehicles (POV).** VAVS volunteer drivers may be assigned by their transportation supervisor to utilize their own vehicles when transporting veterans seeking VA approved benefits and/or services. Reimbursement may be received for incidental expenses from sources other than VA.

NOTE: VAVS volunteers may not charge for their services.

d. **Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation Network.** The DAV Transportation Network (DAV TN) is a nationwide Volunteer-based Transportation Program designed to augment the need for supplemental transportation for veteran patients to and from medical appointments.

(1) Facilities initially establishing DAV TNs are encouraged to establish a task group to determine the transportation needs of beneficiaries, research existing transportation services, and analyze potential support from voluntary organizations and individuals. The task group should be composed of representatives from Medical Administration Service (MAS), Social Work Service, Voluntary Service, and other services as deemed appropriate.

(2) Volunteer transportation services consist of, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Private vehicles,
- (b) DAV Department or Chapter vehicles,
- (c) Public transportation,
- (d) Contracted transportation, and
- (e) Government-owned vehicles.

(3) The DAV establishes and funds the position of a DAV Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) who assumes the responsibility for coordination of the local DAV TN. This individual coordinates with VA staff to ensure the availability and utilization of the full range of community transportation resources to meet the needs of the local facility.

(4) The HSC is located at the VA facility as a paid employee of DAV. The HSC is required to sign the waiver statement on VA Form 10-5390, RS Volunteer Information Card, or facsimile, for the purpose of assuring the volunteer drivers assigned by the HSC are protected by the provision of the FTCA. The Voluntary Service Officer keeps this waiver on file. The HSC is supervised by a designated VA employee in cooperation with DAV.

(5) MAS and Voluntary Service personnel collaborate with the DAV HSC in establishing local procedures to schedule transportation to meet the needs of the veteran patient.

(6) Duties of the DAV HSC and/or transportation coordinator include:

- (a) Setting up a DAV TN Office at the facility, and ensuring that it is adequately staffed full time;
- (b) Coordination and assignment of all transportation provided by volunteer drivers as described in policies established by the VA facility;

- (c) Orientation and training of all volunteer drivers; and
- (d) Completion of accurate records for all transportation including:
 - 1. Name of veterans transported,
 - 2. Date and time of pickup and delivery of veterans,
 - 3. Mileage traveled as determined by odometer readings,
 - 4. Volunteer hours (see subpar. 6a(2)(b)), and
 - 5. The review of records of volunteer drivers to ensure compliance with requirements.
- (e) Recruitment of volunteer drivers to include Non-affiliated or members of any VAVS organization;
- (f) Publicity concerning the program for the purpose of informing veterans of transportation availability;
- (g) Reporting the need for unscheduled maintenance to Engineering Service;
- (h) Communication with the organization concerning the status of the DAV TN and its needs;
- (i) Reimbursement to drivers for out-of-pocket expenses as authorized by DAV; and
- (j) Arrangements for transportation of veterans by public or contractual transportation when drivers are not available or public transportation as appropriate.

NOTE: *The expenses of this transportation, when authorized by DAV, will be paid by DAV.*

e. **Responsibilities.**

- (1) Engineering Service is responsible for:
 - (a) Scheduling routine maintenance, vehicle inspections, and determination and/or development of a plan for vehicle replacement; and
 - (b) Compliance with motor vehicle safety training as outlined in M-3, Part III, Section 32.30.
- (2) VA Police are responsible for ensuring that the driving record check will be the same as that required for VA drivers.
- (3) Voluntary Service is responsible for:
 - (a) Developing a station memorandum governing the acceptance and utilization of transportation volunteers;
 - (b) Ensuring that necessary training is provided by appropriate services; i.e., the training should include, but is not limited to procedures, safety, reporting requirements, etc.;
 - (c) Ensuring that position descriptions for the HSC and volunteer drivers are developed; and
 - (d) Developing risk management procedures.
- (4) MAS is responsible for coordinating the transportation of scheduled patients with the HSC.
- (5) Agent Cashiers are authorized by VA Handbook 4010 to accept checks written by representatives of DAV for beneficiary travel of non-hospitalized veterans, provided they are cashed by the veteran in whose favor they are drawn.
- (6) Social Work Service is responsible for referring patients needing transportation to the HSC.

(7) Employee Health is responsible to provide physical exams or screenings as deemed appropriate.

f. **Transportation of Non-Beneficiaries.** Transportation of non-beneficiaries is only authorized in those instances where it is medically indicated for the veteran patient to be accompanied or escorted during transport.

13. NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

a. **Background.** The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans was established as an official VA Program in 1978, and is celebrated each year the week of February 14. Voluntary Service is assigned overall program responsibility for the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. The purpose of this program is threefold, to:

- (1) Pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans;
- (2) Increase community awareness of the role of the medical center; and
- (3) Encourage individuals to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

b. **Responsibilities.**

(1) VHA Headquarters Voluntary Service Office. The VHA Headquarters Voluntary Service Office (10C2), will:

(a) Develop guidelines and criteria for the selection of a National Salute Chairperson and present a list of possible candidates to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for concurrence and/or selection of a National Chairperson;

(b) Arrange for appropriate publicity and recognition for the National Salute Chairperson (i.e., VHA announcements, White House photographic opportunity, participation in VAVS NAC annual meeting, etc.);

(c) Develop a proposed budget to support the National Salute Chairperson's expenses incurred while visiting VA medical facilities (the budget will be presented to the General Post Fund Review Committee for approval);

(d) Coordinate the Chairperson's schedule of visits to VA medical facilities;

(e) Assist the Voluntary Service Officer, at the local level with the National Chairperson's visits; and

(f) Coordinate the Ann Landers "Valentines for Vets" Program.

(2) Facility Medical Center Director. The medical center Director will:

(a) Designate a Salute Coordinator, and

(a) Establish necessary committees.

(3) Voluntary Service Officer. The Voluntary Service Officer will submit a summary report of the National Salute activities. This report will be submitted to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), through the appropriate channels by the 10th workday in March (see suggested format in App. B).

14. REFERENCES

- a. Title 5 U.S.C. 81, Compensation for Work Injuries.
- b. Title 5 U.S.C. 552a, Records Maintained on Individuals.
- c. Title 28 U.S.C., Sections 1346(b) and 2671-2680, Federal Tort Claims Act.
- d. Title 38 U.S.C. 513, Contracts and Personal Services.
- e. Title 38 U.S.C. 5701, Confidential Nature of Claims.
- f. Title 38 U.S.C. 7332, Confidentiality of Certain Medical Records.

- g. Title 38 U.S.C. 8301, Authority to Accept Gifts, Devises and Bequests.
- h. Pub. L. 92-463, Federal Advisory Committee Act.
- i. Pub. L. 102-86, Section 504, Expansion of Authority to Accept Gifts, Bequests, and Devises.
- j.. Title 5 CFR Part 930, Subpart A, Motor Vehicle Operators.
- k. FPMR, Subchapter H, Property Utilization and Disposal.
- l. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 3, Subparagraph 1e(1) and (2), Meals for Volunteers.
- m. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 26, Reports Management.
- n. MP-3, Part III, Section 32.30, Motor Vehicle Safety Program.
- o. 5 U.S.C. 3109, WOC Appointments.
- p. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 792, Health Services.
- q. VA Directive 5810, Managing Workers' Compensation Cases and Costs.
- r. M-1, Part I, Chapter 2, Quarters and Subsistence.
- s. M-1, Part 1, Chapter 25, Beneficiary Travel.
- t. M-2, Part II, Chapter 5, Chaplain Service Administrative Policies.
- u. VHA Directive 4721, General Post Fund.
- v. Volunteer Management User Manual, Version 4.0
- w. Opinion of General Counsel 4-65 (October 13, 1965), Transportation of Volunteers.
- x. RCS 10-1, VHA Records Control Schedule.
- y. VA Handbook 4010, Agent Cashier Procedures.

VAVS Committee
Fiscal Year [year] Cumulative Attendance Listing
Name of VA Facility
City, State, ZIP
Date

Organization	Appointment			Oct	Jan	Apr	July	FY To Date
	Title	Expiration						Organizational Representation Percentage
American War Mothers (Name)	R	9/1/97	P	P	P	E	100	
American Natl. Red Cross (Name)	R	IND	P	P	-	-	50	
Disabled American Veterans (Name)	R	IND	P	P	P	P	100	
(Name)	D							
(Name) -- (state)		AR 12/31/95	P	*	*	*		
Nonaffiliated Volunteers (Name)	R	6/30/96	P	P	*		75	
Representative-at-large (Name)	R	5/31/96	P	-	P	*	50	
Southside Kiwanis (Name)	D	10/30/96 -	P	-	P		50	
Veterans of Foreign Wars (Name)	R	IND	P	-	-	P	75	
(Name)	D	IND	-	-	P	-		
(Name)	H	IND	P	P	-	P		
V.F.W. Ladies Auxiliary (Name)	R	IND	P	P	P	P	100	

SYMBOLS: **R** Representative **P** Present
 D Deputy Representative **-** Absent
 AR Associate Representative ***** Not certified
 DA Deputy Associate Representative **E** Excused
 H Honorary Representative **IND** Indefinite

NOTE: This sample is written to reflect information as of October 1, 1996.

**SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR THE
NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS
FACILITY EVALUATION REPORT**

1. Name of facility.
2. Address.
3. Name and title of Salute Coordinator.
4. Telephone number (FTS).
5. A brief narrative of Salute activities including programs, photos and length and time of program.
6. Approximate number of patients visited.
7. Approximate number of visitors.
8. List any special visitors; i.e., sports celebrities, military personnel, etc.
9. Media coverage: newspapers, television, and radio.
10. Recommendations and/or concerns.
11. Number of valentines received from the Ann Landers' Program and other sources.
12. Innovative uses of valentines.
13. Number of volunteers recruited as a result of the program.